

THE Christian History;

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival
of Religion in *England Scotland and America.*

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*Saturday* FEBRUARY 11. 1743, 4. \$ N<sup>o</sup> 50.  
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*The Rev. Mr. SHURTLEFF's Account of the Revival of
Religion at Portsmouth in New-Hampshire finished.*

ON the 6th of *February last*, which was the Season of celebrating the Sacrament of the *Supper*; among others that were wrought upon in the Time of the Sermon, *one Woman* belonging to the Communion, who sat in one of the Galleries was so far affected, and had her bodily Frame so far weaken'd, that she could not come down: and tho' she made some Signs to have the Elements brought up to her, it was not perceiv'd, and so went without them: But she sweetly fed upon the *Bread of Life*, and told me afterwards, that it was the most blessed Sacrament she ever enjoy'd. Towards the close of the sacred Solemnity, the *Aspect* of most of the Communicants seem'd to be much chang'd from what it was at first: and as an uncommon Joy sat upon the Countenance of many of them, so as soon as it was over, they could not forbear expressing it, in the most sweet and cheerful Praises. There were but few of them that went from the House of God till the Evening; and then seem'd to leave it with considerable Reluctancy. We were not without something of a like Nature upon several of the successive Communion.

Tho' at present there does not seem to be altogether that Life and Fervor in Religion as to some, that has appear'd in Times past: GOD is I trust pouring out a Spirit of Supplication upon many of his People, which I hope may be a Token of farther Good. Numbers meet together to supplicate the Throne of Grace upon the Evening of every Day in the Week, but Saturday, when there is no publick Lecture. I have sometimes been at one, and sometimes at another, of their Meetings; and from all that I have seen, and all that I

can hear, they are carried on with a becoming Solemnity and Devotion.

Thus I have given you *some Hints* from whence you'll be able to guess *what has been*, and *what is* the State of Religion among us.

And now I am confident that as *you* have been praising GOD on our Behalf, so we have had, and still have a Remembrance in your Prayers, and earnestly desire the Continuance of them. And may you, dear Sir, have more and more of the Presence of GOD with you. May you be carried thro' all the *Reproaches* and *Difficulties* that your firm Attachment to your dear REDEEMER's Kingdom and Interest, may expose you to. *May none of these Things move you*; and *may you not count even your Life dear to you*, so that you finish your Course with Joy, and the Ministry you have received &c.

I am your very affectionate Brother,
and Fellow Servant in the Gospel &c.

William Shurtleff.

Brief Account of the Revival of Religion at BROOKLINE, about five Miles to the West South Westward of BOSTON, in a Letter from the Rev. Mr. JAMES ALLEN, Pastor of the Church there, to the late Rev. Mr. COOPER, wrote the Day after the Assembly of Pastors in July last.

Reverend and dear Sir,

MR. Balch has been pleased to come thus far out of his Way to bring me the glad Tidings of your united Testimony to the Work of GOD.

I am not able to express the Joy with which I received the News: and consequent upon it, I was not able to come to Town to Day, being very much indisposed by the Head-ach &c. but Sir, I was thoughtful of you, the Committee I mean, and now thank the LORD that my secret Supplications are so suddenly and fully answered.

I did not give in as some did a verbal Testimony yesterday to the Effusions of the DIVINE SPIRIT in a Work of Conviction and Grace among us: I thought my being present was sufficient, and then my natural Temper ever restrains me
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from speaking upon such Occasions before those much wiser and better than my self ; but I have since wished I had, to the Glory of free and sovereign Grace, made a short Declaration in the following Manner ; *That there has been a very distinguishing and remarkable Work of GOD going on in the Land,* I have been so much a Witness to in many Towns where I have occasionally been *within these two Years* ; that I think I am as firm in the Belief of it as that there is a Sun in the Heavens, or of my own Existence. For what but the GOD that formed it, can so impress the Mind with a Sense of *Sin*, and its *destructive Consequents*, as to cause the *greatest Sorrow of Heart*, and Streams of penitential Tears to flow from the Eyes ? What can create in the Soul *earnest restless and vehement Desires* after the *Love, Grace, and Fellowship of CHRIST*, but that GOD that first formed the Spirit of Man within him, and can turn the Heart as a *River of Water* ? Who but the *GOD of Grace* can make the Drunkard temperate, and the prodigal Son, a sober serious Man &c ?

Which Things have been common in *other Places* to my frequent Observation : nor are we destitute of some signal Instances of free and sovereign Grace among *us here*. There have been *Scores* of Persons under *Awakenings* ; yea I have sometimes thought there has not been a single Person of my Congregation, but has been under more or less *Concern* about the important Matters of another World, and *what he shou'd do to be saved* : Tho' these Impressions I fear are worn off in many, but in others I have no Reason to doubt but they have been carried on to a *sound and saving Conversion*. Additions to the Church have been considerable for Numbers, *of such as I hope thro' Grace shall be saved*, and chiefly of *younger Persons*, and one of but *eleven Years of Age*, and another in the *eleventh & last Hour of Life*, being above seventy ; *Three* of a liberal Education ; *two* of them since hopeful young *Preachers*. In *some few* the *Terrors* have been so great that they have cried out in Distress ; in *others* the liberal Communications of divine Light and Joy have had the like Effect.

One of our young *Converts* died the *last Fall* in a very glorious and triumphant Manner ; the only one that has died among us since the blessed Work began. I was called to visit her about *ten the Evening before she died* ; and finding her very low in Spirit as well as Body, I tarried all the Night,

sometimes *discourfing*, and sometimes *praying* with her : but ſhe received no Comfort. In the *Morning* after Prayer, ſhe turned her Face to the Wall, and lay ſtill for a little Time ; and then broke out, and ſaid, *Now I am ready to die ! Now I am ready to die !* I immediately ſtept to her, and ſaid, *Child, have you found CHRIST ?* *Oh yes*, ſaid ſhe, *I have found him, I have found him !* I asked her, *If ſhe was now aſſured of the Love of CHRIST to her ?* She answered, *I am ſure, I am ſure ! Now I can leave Parents, and Friends, and all for CHRIST ! Come LORD JESUS ! ---- Oh ſweet JESUS ! Oh the Anthems of Joy ! ---- Oh ſweet ſweet ſweet !* And other Expreſſions of the like Nature : In which happy Frame ſhe continued about *two or three Hours*, and then breathed out her Soul into the Boſom of JESUS her Beloved. Theſe Things are the LORD's *Doings*, and loudly call for our Admiration and Praise.

Revival of Religion in the North Precinct of BRIDGEWATER in the Province of the MASSACHUSETTS, in a Letter from the Rev. Mr. PORTER Paſtor of the Church there.

To the Author of the CHRISTIAN HISTORY.

DIVINE Providence has caſt my Lot in BRIDGEWATER, in the County of *Plymouth*, about *thirty Miles* Southward from BOSTON : A Town ſettled in the Year 1652, by a Number of ſerious Chriſtians, wherein there was a Church gathered and the Reverend Mr. JAMES KEITH, a Scotiſh Gentleman, ordained the Paſtor of it in 1663 ; who continued with them preaching the everlaſting Goſpel about *fifty ſix Years*.

And as to the *People* of the Town, I may further obſerve ; It was remarked of them by Strangers, as well as Perſons in the Neighbourhood, at their *firſt ſettling* and *ſometime after*, that they were a People of the greateſt Modeſty and Seriousneſs, and moſt exact punctual and conſciencious in diſcharging *firſt* and *ſecond Table Duties*, of any they were acquainted with : But this high Character (with Lamentation let it be ſpoken) was not given them long : the Gold ſoon became dim, and the moſt fine Gold changed. For a Number

ber of the first Planters, (pious Men and experimental Christians) not being suffered to continue by Reason of Death; their Posterity (not having their holy Examples, pious Instructions, and faithful Admonitions) soon began gradually to *decline*, and depart from the God of their Fathers. And thus they went on for *several Years*; until Religion was almost sunk into a meer *Form*: Few had more than a Name to live: In most, God seemed not in all their Thoughts; before he was not in their Mouths, using his Name reverently and to good Purpose. Little of GOD, of CHRIST, of *Heaven*, of the *Soul*, was to be found in the Conversation of those that passed for the best of Christians. Experimental Religion and the Power of Godliness, seemed to have taken their Flight from *Bridgewater*. This I had a great Advantage and Opportunity to know, by Reason of Providence calling me to keep *School* in all the Parts of the Town, before this remarkable *Revival* of Religion.

Now in these Days of Declension, neither Ordinances nor Providences, had much effect on the People. Indeed by some sore Distempers with which God was pleased to visit them, in multiplying the Slain, and the Ministers in the Town improving them by adapting their Discourses to such Seasons of Mortality; some thro' the Blessing of God were awakened to a Concern about the Salvation of their Souls. But I have Reason to think that few of their *Convictions* issued in *Conversion*, or their Distress in the Joy of the LORD, or Comfort of the HOLY GHOST: But that *most* of them rested in various Duties, short of a saving Closure with CHRIST.

And so *in general* they remained very secure, and unconcerned about the great and momentous Affair of securing the Salvation of the Soul; 'till sometime in the *Beginning* of the Year 1741, after the Reverend and dear Mr. WHITEFIELD and Reverend Mr. TENNENT had been at BOSTON, and thro' the Province, preaching the everlasting Gospel with such Unweariedness and Success. Whose Names, especially the former, I shall always mention with Respect and Honour, whatever others may think or say of him, from the Benefit one of the meanest and most unworthy of CHRIST's Ministers hopes he receiv'd by his holy and servent Ministrations while at BOSTON. Be sure I knew nothing *rightly* of my Sin & Danger, of my Need of a SAVIOUR, of the
Way

Way of Salvation by him : neither was established in the *Doctrines of Grace* ; (tho' a Preacher, and one who endeavoured to instruct others in the Way) till I heard *that Man of God*. And if the LORD had permitted me to have took the Oversight of a Flock, as I had a Call to do, and had given my Answer ; the Blind would have led the Blind, and so 'tis like both would have fallen into the Ditch.--- But he did not. *Bless the LORD, O my Soul, and all that is within me bless his holy Name*, for what he did for me, thro' the Instrumentality of *that Man*. And I was quickened & strengthened very much by Mr. TENNENT's excellent Sermons, and was desirous all should hear them, as I had done, and urged many to it.

Few of the People in *Bridgwater* heard Mr. WHITEFIELD : but the most did Mr. TENNENT ; for as *this Man of God*, who had Skill and Will to win Souls, was upon his Return home, and passing thro' a neighbouring Town in *March 1740, 1.* some of the Reverend *Ministers in Bridgwater*, with my self, went to see him ; in order to invite him to visit *Bridgwater* ; that we and our dear Charges might partake of his Gifts and Graces, and that he might have some Seals of his Ministry with us, as well as in other Places. And after some *Intreaties* (for he was determined another Way, *viz.* to *Freetown* and *Tiverton*) we gained a Promise from him, that (God willing) he would visit us next Day. Accordingly he came, and preached *three Sermons* in the Reverend Mr. PERKINS's Meeting-House in the *Western Precinct* ; two in the Day, one in the Evening. And tho' the Warning was short, the People in general not knowing it, till that Morning, and the Season very difficult, by Reason of the Snow ; yet there was a large and crowded Assembly. They came from all Parts of the Town, (for you must note that tho' in good Mr. KEITH's Day, there was but *one Society*, now there are *four* ; to which the Rev. Mr. DANIEL PERKINS, JOHN ANGIER, JOHN SHAW, and *my self*, stand severally in pastoral Relation) --- and many I believe went away blessing God for the Opportunity ; tho' some mocked. It appears that some close Hypocrites were detected, some secure awakened, and *many* of our *young People* convinced of the Sin of spending away Days & Nights in Singing and Dancing, and other youthful Sins, which they were much addicted to before, and greatly delighted in.

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After this, *Religion* was more talked of in our Town ; particularly the great Doctrines of our holy Religion were often the Subject of Conversation ; not for Strife and Contention, but Information and Edification.

The People now thro' the Town were very inquisitive to know how Things were ; having heard of the *Revival* of Religion in some Places. They appeared of a very teachable Disposition : they were swift to hear the Word ; an uncommon Thirst after it appeared in them. Our *Lectures* (which were almost every Week in one Part of the Town, or another) were more generally attended than before, and with much greater Seriousness and Solemnity ; which encouraged us the *Ministers* in the Town, to set up *Evening Lectures*, to be attended in all Parts of the Town ; which (excepting one) are upheld to this Time ; beside all our *Lectures* in private Houses, which have not been a few ; and occasional *Lectures* from Strangers who came to visit us : which I believe God has blessed to the good of many Souls. *Spiritual Clouds* seem'd to be gathering apace ; a Shower of divine and heavenly Blessings seem'd nigh being rained down on *Bridge-water*, and the whole Town becoming a Mountain of Holiness. O the delightful Prospect we now had ! ---

But I shall say no more with Respect to the other Societies in Conjunction with our own, or of the promising Appearances in them, and what God has done for them. But leaving this for their *Reverend Pastors* to do ; I come to declare more particularly what great Things the LORD has done for the little Society called the *North Precinct*, consisting of near sixty Families, over which I was ordained the 15th of October 1740.

And as I observed, In the Beginning of the Year 1741, there was a visible Appearance of a religious Concern on the Minds of many, especially the young People ; which brought them to leave their youthful Practices, of Singing, Dancing, Company-keeping, which before they esteemed lawful Recreations, and took abundance of Pleasure in. And some came to Resolutions not only to leave spending away *Evenings* this Way, in which they had so much dishonoured God, and injured their immortal Souls ; but to spend them in religious Exercises ; particularly the *Sabbath Evening*, which was spent before in Vanity, they proposed to meet on, for the Service of GOD : As I found by a Letter directed to,

to, and given me by one of the young Men of our Society, signed by himself and several others: wherein they signified their Concern of Soul, and Design to set up Evening Meetings, and desire that others would join with them; as also my Direction in, and Approbation of the Affair, and that I would favour them with a Sermon to encourage them to hold on, and encourage others to join with them. This good Symptom did put Gladness in my Heart, more than when my Corn and Wine and Oil increased; and I readily complied with their Desire: and accordingly they spent every Sabbath Evening in Singing, Praying, Reading, and such like religious Exercises.

And now, being in the Spring 1741, there appeared a considerable external Alteration in most of the young People in the Place: which was observed and spoken of by diverse in the Neighbourhood. Now Things looked very promising and hopeful. All Things seemed to be concurring, to bring about a glorious and remarkable Revival of Religion: *To make our Sons as Plants growing up in their Youth, and our Daughters as Corner Stones polished after the Similitude of a Palace.* But nothing so remarkable and gracious, as what followed. The best Wine was not yet bestowed; as we found by happy Experience afterward.

(To be continued.)



ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS is to put our Customers in Mind, that this Day Fortnight, viz. Saturday the 25th of this Month, will be publish'd the last Number of our Christian History for this Year. And since several have express'd themselves so well pleas'd with our Paper as earnestly to desire its Continuance: This may signify that, provided the Reverend Ministers in this and the neighbouring Provinces and Colonies will please to send in to us suitable Materials, we are willing to proceed in the Affair. And if we do, we shall take it for granted that our Subscribers would have us send them on the same Terms as in the Year past, unless they signify their Minds to the contrary.